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SUBJECT: UNAMI'S VIEW OF HUMANITARIAN SITUATION IN IRAQ

Summary

1. (SBU) In an April 20 donor coordination meeting UNAMI Humanitarian Officer Wojtek Wilk reported that 50,000 to 100,000 IDPs have fled Fallujah to Baghdad. He noted the problems relief agencies face providing aid in Fallujah and unconfirmed reports of a possible new movement of Iranian Kurds from Al-Tash refugee camp to the Jordanian border. Fallujah municipal council members are reportedly in Amman meeting with GOJ officials and the donor community to discuss relief. UNAMI Chief of Strategic Planning, Michael Dalton, said one of the key issues for the April 22 International Reconstruction Fund Facility for Iraq (IRFFI) meeting in Washington is to check the progress of aid pledges from various donors. UNSECOORD rep Peter Fry made the observation that insurgent activity appeared to be increasingly coordinated. We report these views without assessing their validity. End Summary.

Humanitarian Situation in Iraq

2. (SBU) In a meeting with the donor community on April 20, United Nations Assistance Mission in Iraq (UNAMI) Humanitarian Officer Wojtek Wilk provided an update on the humanitarian situation in Iraq. He reported a sizeable increase in the number of Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) fleeing Fallujah to Baghdad, noting that between 50,000 to 100,000 civilians are believed to have been displaced. 3,000 IDP families are receiving assistance at three major transit points outside Fallujah, set up in local mosques. UNAMI estimates that another 8,000 families are receiving assistance from relatives, friends or mosques in the Baghdad area. Up to 50,000 additional IDPs may have taken refuge in villages around Fallujah. UNAMI has heard reports of new movements of Iranian Kurds from the Al-Tash refugee camp toward the no-man's land at the Jordanian border due to high tension levels in Al Ramadi. (UNHCR told refcoord on April 22 that these reports have not been confirmed).

3. (SBU) UNAMI continues to be concerned by the humanitarian situation within Fallujah and Najaf. In Fallujah, UNAMI is concerned about recent reports of a few wounded Iraqis arrested at the Fallujah hospital by coalition forces, fearing this will discourage other wounded from seeking medical attention. The overall number of casualties within Fallujah is unclear as many may be buried--alive or dead--under homes. Reports from within Fallujah cite the lack of fresh food and conflicting accounts of fresh water shortages as troubling. Paul Filler, head of the European Commission Humanitarian Aid Office (ECHO) Iraq Mission (currently based in Amman), said that a small group of Fallujah municipal council members are in Amman meeting with GOJ officials and the donor community to discuss aid relief to the city. He stressed that the trip is not to discuss the political situation or criticize the CPA. In Najaf, UNAMI claimed that the occupation of the main hospital by coalition military personnel discouraged local people from seeking treatment. Outside the main hospital, there is only one operating room in the city, in a maternity clinic.

Strategic Planning and IRFFI

4. (SBU) Michael Dalton, Chief of UNAMI Strategic Planning, said that the 10 agency clusters--different UN agencies grouped together for ease of planning and coordination--are in the process of finalizing plans for the UN Trust Fund meeting in Amman on May 3, 2004. They have a tight, well-organized rollout strategy and need only work out the details. Dalton noted that the April 22 International Reconstruction Fund Facility for Iraq (IRFFI) meeting in Washington would check the progress of aid pledges from various donors.

Security Update

15. (SBU) UNSECOORD's Peter Fry stressed that insurgent activity continues with what he saw as increasing coordination. He pointed to Kirkuk as the tension point between the Kurds and northern Sunni elements. On the political-religious front, al-Sadr's position of strength is yet undetermined, but he appeals to the youth. He reported signs of Sunni fundamentalist "oppression" of fellow Iraqis in the central region, as well as IGC members disassociating themselves from coalition forces. Fry worries that the recent kidnappings will continue with greater frequency amid rumors of significant bounties offered to kidnap Americans and NGO personnel. Fry did not comment on the security situation after June 30, 2004, stating that it was too far away. On the Jordanian front, he reported that locals deliberately threw soda cans at 2 NGO workers while driving in Amman the other day.

16. (U) Baghdad minimize considered.

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